

Colorado House of Representatives

Selected Rules at a Glance



Powers and Duties of Speaker

- Chair of House when seated as the body. **House Rule 3 (b) (1)**
- Preserves order and decorum. **House Rule 3 (b) (2)**
- Decides all questions of order, subject to member's right to appeal to the House. **House Rule 3 (b) (3)**
- Questions of order are **not debatable**, except on appeal from decision of the Speaker. **House Rule 10**
- Names the chair of committee of the whole. **House Rule 3 (b) (6)**
- Committees: Determines number of members and number from each political party. Appoints majority and unaffiliated members and designates chair and vice-chair for each committee of reference. **House Rule 3 (b) (8) and House Rule 25 (d)**
- Refers bills and may refer resolutions to appropriate committee of reference. **House Rule 3 (b) (9)**

Matters not covered by House Rules are governed by the decision of the Speaker, subject to appeal. **House Rule 46 (a)**

Introduction, Reading, and Passage of Bills

Every bill is read by title when introduced and read on 2nd and 3rd reading on two different days before final passage. **House Rule 27 (b)**

Unless a member requests reading a bill at length on 2nd or 3rd reading, it is read by title only and the unanimous consent of the members present to dispense with reading at length is presumed. **House Rule 27 (b)**

Reading before the House sitting as committee of the whole constitutes second reading. **House Rule 27 (b)**

No bill is declared passed unless a majority of the members elected (33) vote for the bill. **House Rule 33 (d)**

House Calendar

If a bill is favorably recommended by a committee for consideration by the House, chair delivers the report and the bill to the chief clerk who places bill on the calendar for consideration by committee of the whole. **House Rule 29 (g) (1) and (3)**

- Chief clerk prepares a list of all bills arranged as general or special orders. **House Rule 43 (f)**

House Order of Business

General Orders. When House proceeds to general orders, no other business, unless it is a special order, is in order until general orders are disposed of, except upon a majority vote of House members. **House Rule 6 (d)**

Special orders. After a bill has been returned to the House by a committee of reference for consideration by the House sitting as a committee of the whole, bill may be made a special order for a particular day or hour. **House Rule 6 (e)**

Proceeding out of order. House may, "upon the affirmative vote of a majority of all members present, proceed out of order to any order of business or return to an order already passed". **House Rule 6 (f)**

Motion to Adjourn or Recess

A motion to adjourn or recess is always in order; but if motion fails, it cannot be considered again unless a motion other than for a call of the House, to adjourn, or to recess, intervenes. **House Rule 8 (a)**

Disagreement - Conference Committee

House may concur in Senate amendments to a House bill; requires a vote of a majority of members elected (33). **House Rule 36 (a)**

If Senate amends a House bill, the House may adhere to its position, recede from its position and concur with the position of the Senate, or request a conference committee. **House Rule 36 (b)**

The House may recede from any matter of difference existing between it and the Senate before consideration of a conference committee report by the House or the Senate, or after Senate's rejection of the conference committee report, not later than the next day of actual session following the rejection of the report. **House Rule 36 (c)**

The Speaker appoints three members to represent House on conference committee. **House Rule 36 (d)**

Miscellaneous Rules and Custom

Demand or "blast" motion. 3 days after bill is referred to a committee of reference, any member may make a 24-hour demand for the committee to report back to the House upon a motion adopted by a majority of all members elected (33). **House Rule 30**

"24-hour rule". Amendments exceeding 1 page must be distributed 24 hours in advance.

"Settled question". If the House or committee of the whole adopts or rejects an amendment, the chair may rule that a subsequent amendment is out of order if its adoption effectively defeats or resurrects the previous final action. **House Rule 34 (a)**

Reconsideration. After House decides a question, member voting on the prevailing side may, before adjournment, move to reconsider or give notice of intention to reconsider. Motion to reconsider requires the affirmative vote of 2/3rds of members elected (44). **House Rule 35 (a) and (b)**

Title question. The chair may, upon request, make a ruling on whether an amendment is germane to the subject of a bill and "fits under the title." **House Rule 28 (a)**

Questions Decided Without Debate

Questions decided without debate:

- Adjournment to a day certain.
- Taking a recess.
- Questions relating to the priority of business.
- Suspension of the rules.
- Previous questions, and motions to limit or to extend the limits of, or to close debate.
- Amending or reconsidering an undebatable question.
- Considering the orders of the day.
- Resolving into committee of the whole.
- Call of the House.

House Rule 15

Previous Question and Limiting Debate

Previous question. The previous question may be moved upon: 1) All recognized motions or amendments that are debatable; 2) A single pending motion or amendment; 3) All or some of a series of pending motions and amendments. **House Rule 16 (a)**

If motion to move previous question is adopted by a majority vote of all members elected (33), all debate ends and the House holds a direct vote upon all motions and amendments involved in the inverse order in which they were offered. **House Rule 16 (b)**

Limiting debate. Upon the affirmative vote of a majority of all members elected (33), debate may be closed at a time not less than one hour from the adoption of a motion to that effect, and once motion is made, no other motion except to adjourn or to recess shall be entertained until the motion to close debate upon the pending question is decided. **House Rule 14 (a)**

Both motions for previous question and to limit debate are non-debatable motions. **House Rule 15 (e)**

Speaking and Voting

A member rising to speak, debate, give a notice, make a motion, submit a report, or for any other purpose, cannot proceed **before addressing and being recognized by the chair**. Then the member may proceed to address the House from the central microphone, or from his or her desk, confining his or her remarks to the purpose for which the member rose. **House Rule 13 (a)**

A member, other than the one moving the question, **shall not speak more than twice** on the same question without the consent of the House **nor speak longer than 10 minutes** without consent of the House. **House Rule 13 (d)**

Voting by ayes and noes sitting as the body (on voting machine), and the names of those voting for and against entered in the journal, in the following instances:

- Upon all bills and concurrent resolutions upon third reading and final passage;
- Upon House concurrence to amendments made by the Senate to House bills;
- Upon adoption of conference committee reports;
- Upon adoption or amendment to a report of the committee of the whole. **House Rule 20 (a)**

All other votes **sitting as the body** are taken viva voce, but a member may demand the ayes and noes (on the voting machine) upon any question. **House Rule 20 (b)**

Every member within the House chamber when a question is stated from the chair shall vote thereon, unless the member is directly interested in the question or has been excused from voting by the House. But when a vote is taken without the use of the voting machine, a member is not obliged to vote upon the question unless the member is within the House chamber when his or her name is called. **House Rule 21 (a)**

A request by a member to be excused from voting shall be made before the call for the ayes and noes has begun. **House Rule 21 (b)**

Conflict of interest. A member who has an immediate personal or financial interest in a bill or measure proposed or pending before the General Assembly shall disclose the fact to the House, and shall not vote upon such bill or measure. **House Rule 21 (c)**

When a vote is taken without the use of the voting machine, a member may change his or her vote before the result is announced, but not after. **House Rule 21 (d)**

A member shall not be compelled by a majority of a political caucus to cast a vote for or against a legislative measure. **House Rule 21 (e)**

Committees of Reference

Members appointed at commencement of 1st regular session after the general election.

- Every House member, except the Speaker, Majority Leader, and Minority Leader, is appointed to at least one committee. **House Rule 25 (c)**

Party representation on committees is proportional to number of members of the two political parties. **House Rule 25 (h)**

The chairman shall announce cancellation of a regularly scheduled committee meeting while the House is in actual session before the time the meeting is scheduled to take place. **House Rule 25 (j) (1) (C)**

Chair of each committee of reference determines the order of business for each committee meeting, including measures to be considered at each meeting, and announces on the House floor the measures to be considered. **House Rule 25 (j) (1) (D)**

Two-thirds of committee members may petition the chair in writing submitted at a regularly scheduled meeting that a specific measure be considered at least 7 days after the measure has been delivered to the chair. Upon receiving the petition, the chair shall list the petitioned measure on the next calendar for consideration by the committee no later than 7 days after receiving the petition. **House Rule 25 (j) (1) (D)**

Committee consideration of a bill's merits and action is required in **each committee to which the bill is assigned** within legislative deadlines. **House Rule 25 (j) (1) (E), (E.1), and (E.4)**

The chair of each committee of reference may limit testimony and discussion on a measure to that which is adequate, in the chair's discretion, to enable the committee to consider the measure on its merits. **House Rule 25 (j) (1) (E.2)**

"Super motion". Consideration of measure required when motion is made out of order to report measure favorably to the COW. **House Rule 25 (j) (1) (G)**

After "final action on a measure", chair must make report to the chief clerk within 3 legislative days.

- During the last 3 days of the legislative session, the chair "shall make any committee of reference report as soon as possible."
- Measure considered P'd if motion that would constitute final action dies on tie vote and committee deadline passes without getting deadline delayed. **House Rule 25 (j) (3)**

The chair and each committee member shall vote on every question coming before the committee unless he or she has an immediate personal or financial interest in the proposed measure. **House Rule 25 (j) (6)**

Committee of the Whole - 2nd Reading

Every bill on general or special orders shall be considered by the House sitting as Committee of the Whole. The title of every bill is read, but reading at length is dispensed with per House Rule 27(b), unless a member asks for reading at length.

House Rule 31(a)

Committee of the Whole formed upon motion, and upon adoption of the motion the Speaker appoints a chairman, who exercises all powers of the Speaker. Motion is non-debatable. Chair not entitled to vote in Committee of the Whole unless the committee is evenly divided on question.

House Rules 3 (b) (6) and 32 (a)

A member may speak more than twice upon the same subject. A call for the ayes and noes (on the voting machine) **may not be made** but a demand for a standing vote may be made upon any question. A motion for the previous question or motion for reconsideration is **not** in order. No appeal from a decision of the chair. **House Rule 32 (b)**

Rise and report. Deliberations of the Committee of the Whole end when a motion is made to rise and report, which is always in order and decided without debate. **House Rule 32 (e)**

Motions that are in order on second reading:

- That the enacting clause of the bill be stricken.
- That the bill be recommitted to a committee of reference for further study and consideration.
- That the bill be passed over and retain its place on the calendar.
- That the bill be amended.
- That the bill be adopted.
- That the committee rise, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.
- That the committee rise and report.

House Rule 29 (h)

Reports of the committee of the whole must be adopted by a majority vote of the members elected (33), which constitutes passage on second reading of each bill considered and approved by the committee of the whole. **House Rule 32 (h)**

Third Reading Amendments

A third reading amendment is not in order unless a majority of the House gives consent to offer a third reading amendment. A substitute amendment is never in order on third reading. **House Rule 33 (b)**

Except within the last 3 days of session, only technical third reading amendments are in order. A majority of the House may consent to refer a bill back to second reading from third reading for consideration of a substantial amendment. **House Rule 33 (b.5)**